

Volume 3, Issue 1

Northwoods Journal

June 2005

Enjoying and Protecting Marinette County's Outdoor Life

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A Few Words...

For those of you who have read our little publication in the past, welcome back. We hope you enjoy this summer's editions as much as last year. We have a whole new collection of Marinette County destinations, angler articles, contest photos, summer events, and nature profiles to share with you again this summer. In addition, articles on our county's wetlands, geology, county forests, and the history of our town halls, are in the works. Stay tuned.

If this is the first time you've stumbled upon the *Northwoods Journal*, take some time to get to know us. We publish our paper once a month from June to September to help you discover all the fascinating natural, historical, and cultural things about Marinette County. Whether you stay here a weekend, a month, or year round, we hope to open your eyes to the many different things there are to see and do.

One last thing: if you aren't able to pick up a paper copy of the *Northwoods Journal* or would like to read last year's editions, each one is available on our website at: www.marinettecounty.com/lw_journal_home.htm. Also, we can send a reminder to your email when a new edition has come out. All you have to do is email me at: akostner@marinettecounty.com to set it up. Your email address will not be used for any other purpose without your permission.

So, settle down in your favorite summer spot with the *Northwoods Journal* each month to learn more about life here and how to fully enjoy it.

Amanda Kostner

Marinette County Land & Water Conservation

Unlimited Family Fun: Free Parks Day and Fishing Weekend

Events happening on June 4 & 5 offer easy and inexpensive ways to for the whole family to enjoy our county's lakes, rivers, and forests.



Sand Lake at Camp Bird

Camp Bird Youth Center Open House

The public is invited to an Open House from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Camp Bird Youth Center on June 4. Archery, boating, fishing, small animals, and camp tours will be offered. Food and refreshments will be available.

The camp is located on scenic Sand Lake (30 acres). It includes a sandy swimming beach, docks, canoes, rowboats, stream and lake fishing, 10 acres of mowed lawn, huge red pines, oak trees, hiking trails, adventure course, nature center, and recreation building. Camp Bird is the property of Marinette County. It is located west of Crivitz. Take Co Hwy W, and then turn north onto Caldron Falls Road. Call 715-732-7530 for more details.



Wisconsin Free Fishing Weekend

Every year, the first consecutive Saturday and Sunday in June is designated as Free

Fishing Weekend throughout the state of Wisconsin. Residents and nonresidents of all ages can fish without a fishing license (and stamps) for these two days. However, all other fishing regulations (length limits, bag limits, etc.) apply. You can pick up a copy of the WI Fishing Regulations anywhere licenses are sold, or go to:

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/fish/

This event is designed to encourage families to get out and fish together.

Free Day at Marinette County Parks

All Marinette County parks, boat landings and day use areas will have free admission on June 4. (Camping fees still apply.) Come and enjoy the natural scenic beauty of our county. Here are just a few parks you can visit.

12-Foot Falls Park (160 Acres) Features a waterfall, picnic area, rustic camping, trout fishing and scenery. Holds 6 campsites. Many other waterfalls and walking trails in the area. Located in the Town of Dunbar on North Branch of the Pike River. Follow Lily Lake Road south off Hwy 8, Twin Lake Road west, and Twelve Foot Falls Road south.

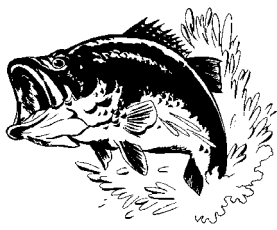
Veteran's Memorial Park (320 Acres) Offers a bridge over Veteran's Falls, a pool at the bottom of the falls, camping, trout fishing, and a large day use area. Holds 15 campsites on the Thunder River. Follow County Highway W west of Crivitz for 12 miles to Parkway road, then north 3 miles.

McClintock Park (320 Acres) Includes three bridges over McClintock Falls, picnic area, camping, trout fishing, and an interesting hardwood-hemlock stand. Holds 10 campsites on the Peshtigo River in the Town of Silver Cliff. Located north of Veteran's Memorial Park on Parkway Road.

If you would like to continue visiting our beautiful parks throughout the summer, a \$2 entrance fee is charged at the gate. Otherwise, a \$12 annual park sticker can be obtained from the Parks Department. For more information about Marinette Co. Parks call (715) 732-7530, or visit:

www.marinettecounty.com/parks_recreation.htm

FISH TALES



Why Isn't the DNR Stocking My Lake?

Fish Management in Marinette County

Whenever two or more anglers get together the talk invariably turns to fishing. Typically, after exchanging lies about big fish, where they are biting and secret baits, the discussion turns to fish management. And when people talk about fish management, they usually mean fish stocking, hence the question, why isn't the DNR stocking my lake? According to professional fish managers, stocking is a valuable tool for managing fish populations but it's not always the right tool for the job. In this article, we will look at the benefits and hazards of fish stocking with a special emphasis on Marinette County lakes.

Fish stocking is done for several different reasons. One of the most common is to introduce a species to a lake where it isn't native in hopes of establishing a self-sustaining population. The danger in introducing any new species, especially a breeding population, is the impacts it may have on the resident fish community. The fish community in any lake has evolved over time to reach some balance of predator and prey species. Any new species introduced to a lake will compete with the native fish, and in any competition, there are always winners and losers.

A good example of this can be found with walleye introductions. Currently the darling of the fishing world, many people think every lake should have walleye. However, walleye historically had a very limited distribution in Wisconsin, being found typically in large river systems and drainage lakes. In Marinette County they were limited to the Menominee and Peshtigo River systems. The DNR has found that

when walleye are stocked in some of our small bass-bluegill lakes they feed heavily on bass fingerlings, which can lead to drastic reductions in the bass population. And while walleye can feed on bass, other fish can also feed on walleye. DNR fish managers warn that in lakes with high crappie numbers walleye introductions often fail since crappie are efficient predators of small walleye. Similar species interactions can occur between northern pike and bass, and northern pike and musky. The potential for negative species interactions is a good reason to seek professional assistance before stocking any lake.

Many times fish are stocked solely to create fishing opportunities for a species where it never existed and where reproduction is not sufficient to sustain a population. Although less dangerous than introducing a new self-sustaining population, the same hazard exists regarding competition with the lake's native fish. This type of stocking is typically referred to as "put-and-take." It is typically an expensive proposition and is by definition a short-term management action.

Stocking can also be done to rehabilitate an existing fish population that has been damaged by winterkill, water pollution or habitat loss. Of course, fixing the problems before stocking must be done for rehabilitation to be successful. In the case of winterkill, game fish typically are the first to die while many forage fish are hardy and survive to repopulate the lake. If the winterkill is a reoccurring problem, aeration may be required during the winter months. Small shallow lakes, of which Marinette County has many, are most susceptible to winterkill. The Marinette County Land & Water Conservation Division can assist with questions about water quality and aeration system design. While shoreline development contributes to runoff pollution, it is typically most severe in agricultural areas. Major sources include unconfined manure piles, feedlot runoff and winter spread manure. Pollution control and restoration of these waters is typically a very expensive proposition.

Recent studies throughout Wisconsin indicate that habitat loss is the most important factor in declining fisheries. On this front Marinette County is no exception. Every fish has specific habitat needs during different stages of their lives. However, in almost every case, shallow water habitat is required for spawning and as nursery areas for fry and young fish. Unfortunately, shoreline development typically results in the loss of this critical habitat. Much of the put-and-take stocking is done on these "habitat challenged" lakes. Fortunately, the latest research shows that with habitat restoration these lakes have the potential to recover and once again support a healthy, self-sustaining fishery.

Often placed in the category of rehabilitation is the common practice of stocking bluegills in lakes that already have plenty of bluegills. Typically, this is done because lakefront property owners are unhappy with the size of bluegills in their lake. Unfortunately, this is seldom a good idea since an overabundance of small bluegill is seldom caused by over fishing. On the contrary, over population is the most common cause of bluegill stunting. Another common practice is stocking hybrid bluegills in hopes that they will grow larger than the natives. Unfortunately, according to WDNR Fisheries Biologist Justine Hasz, hybrid bluegill are so aggressive that they out compete the native, which can cause even (Please see **Fish** on page 6)

Nature's Almanac

June 5

Since last fall, for about two hundred days, the doe has been carrying her baby. Now, in the shelter of the shady woods of late May or early June, she gives birth to her fawn.



Baby mammals are either altricial or precocious. Altricial babies are born helpless and depend on parents for all their needs; precocious young are quite capable at birth and can walk quickly thereafter. Hoofed mammals tend to be precocious, and this is true of the fawn: it is born covered with hair and able to walk.

Wearing a brown coat with large white spots, the fawn spends the month of June sleeping and feeding. When resting, the fawn remains curled up in a protected spot on the ground, and the white spots on brown look like sunlight penetrating the trees and dappling the forest floor. Such camouflage is important, for at these resting times the fawn is in danger from a coyote or fox that is not likely to bring down an adult deer but will prey on the young. Soon the fawn will travel short distances with the mother – we may glimpse them together during these brief excursions. It will nurse often and grow quickly. Frequently the fawn is an only child, but as does mature, they often have twins.

June 15

The nights of June are alive with fireflies. At the end of long June days these living lights appear. Fireflies, or lightning bugs, are named inaccurately since they are actually a type of beetle. They produce a cold light by combining a chemical called luciferin with luciferase (an enzyme) and oxygen. This controlled bioluminescence takes place in the fireflies' abdomen.

Though the how of firefly lighting is understood, there is still some question regarding the why, although it appears to be part of the mating ritual. Typically, the male flies and flashes his light for a specific duration and in a specific color while the female glows her response from the ground. These lights in the night can bring males and females together. Time, season, and variations in the flight distinguish the different species.

June 25

When we look among the meadow wildflowers during June, it is not unusual to see what appears to be a mass of frothy spit. The foamy suds appear on the stem of nearly any meadow plant and also on bushes and trees. Though there are folk stories regarding its source, the froth is not made by the plant but is formed by a small insect living on the stem – the spittlebug or froghopper.

Gray-brown oval adult spittlebugs are one-fourth inch long. Last fall, the females deposited their eggs on the stems of plants, near the ground. A small green nymph developed in each egg.

The nymph gets plenty of food from the sap of the stem but needs more protection. So, in one of nature's more creative ways, it makes its own house. Excreted sap is mixed with an intestinal enzyme to produce a soapy liquid. Using its abdomen, the nymph blows air into this mixture, covering itself with foamy bubbles that provide a protective shelter. Many a would-be predator is deterred by this spit like covering. By midsummer, nymphs have matured, and the spit is gone.



From, "Backyard Almanac," by Larry Weber; illustrations by Judy Gibbs

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Northwoods Journal focuses on various outdoor recreation opportunities and local environmental topics to inform readers about natural resource use, management, and recreation in Marinette County.

Published in cooperation by:

► Land & Water Conservation Division,
Marinette County Land Information
Department

► University of Wisconsin-Extension
UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA. To ensure equal access, please make requests for reasonable accommodations as soon as possible prior to the scheduled program. If you need this material in another format, please contact the UW-Extension office at 715-732-7510.

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Check us out on the web at:

www.marinettecounty.com/lw_home.htm



Turtle Populations Continue to Decline Due to Highway Mortality and Habitat Loss

Turtles will begin searching for nesting sites over next few weeks

With Wisconsin's populations of native turtles continuing to decline, state wildlife officials are reminding motorists they can help conserve their dwindling populations by being alert the next few weeks for turtles crossing roads in search of suitable sites to build nests and lay eggs.

"Highway mortality is probably one of the biggest threats to our native turtle populations," says Bob Hay, amphibian and reptile biologist with the Department of Natural Resources. "Turtle habitat has been severely fragmented by roads over the past several decades, and every year thousands of turtles die on Wisconsin roadways."

While turtles are killed on roads throughout their active season, road deaths increase dramatically in the spring when females seek nesting sites. Late May is the traditional time for nesting turtles to begin appearing on roads, and this activity may extend into early July.

Turtles cross roads because the roads often separate their lowland overwintering habitat from the upland, well-drained habitat in which they deposit their eggs. In addition, Hay notes they can be very persistent. Some individuals return to the same location every time they lay eggs and these places often change in character, or the pathway to these sites is intersected by a new road.

"If you see a turtle on the road -- and only if it's safe to do so -- carrying the turtle across the road will help reduce the number of animals killed by vehicles," says Hay. "It's important to carry them in the direction they're already headed," he added, "because if you turn them around they'll often try again until they succeed or get run over."

For large turtles, like snapping turtles, the safest action to avoid being bitten is to gently drag them across the road by their tails leaving their front feet on the pavement. "Every turtle you save increases the chance of maintaining already dwindling turtle populations -- especially since most of the turtles killed on roads during nesting season are mature females," he says.

Wisconsin is home to ten turtle species; five of which are experiencing significant population declines.

Turtles are up against tough odds even without highway mortality. Hay says that as few as 5 percent of eggs laid survive to hatch and of those, only one in 100 may survive to reproductive age. Turtle predators include raccoons, skunks, opossums, herons, egrets, seagulls, cranes and crows.

The state-threatened Blanding's turtle is particularly vulnerable to highway-related mortality. It takes a hatching Blanding's turtle 17-18 years to reach reproductive maturity. Populations of this threatened species are typically much lower than other turtle species and every nesting female that is killed can be significant for the local population.

Another factor affecting turtles is the illegal collecting of turtles off roadways during



Destination.... Marinette County Exploring Harmony Arboretum

Every day hundreds of people drive within a mile of one of the more interesting spots in Marinette County. Harmony Arboretum is a 478-acre parcel managed by the Marinette County Land Information Department. The entrance is located about 1/4 mile south of Highway 64 on the east side of County E. The property consists of agricultural fields, old fields, horticultural demonstration areas, a prairie, and a large forested area.

The first things you see when you pull in the driveway are the demonstration gardens maintained by the Northern Lights Master Gardeners Association and UW-Extension. Different plots feature vegetables, annual and perennial flowers, and decorative shrubs and ground covers. For 2005, demonstration projects include establishment of an orchard, creation of a water garden, and this year's focus vegetable family, legumes (beans, peas, etc.). The next obvious feature is a pavilion. It was built to shelter people attending seminars and workshops. The Land & Water Conservation Division and UW-Extension sponsor a series of seminars each year exploring different aspects of nature and horticulture. *(For more information on the seminars, see page 7 or visit:*

www.marinettecounty.com/lw_ed_har_prog.htm)

Northeast of the pavilion is a 17-acre prairie demonstration, now in its fifth year. A path has been mowed through the prairie allowing for easy access and viewing the plant species. There are about thirty prairie species present and more reveal themselves each year. A prairie walk will be led on August 18 at which you can learn what a prairie is, why we have them, and what wildlife need prairies. We also will discuss planting and maintaining your own prairie.

Continuing down the entrance driveway you come to the parking lot for the Harmony Memorial Hardwoods Trail. Some people feel this trail is the best thing the Arboretum offers. Upon entering the trail, you cross Sucker Brook, wind through cedar woods and traverse a mound of glacial till. You then enter a tunnel through the brush that opens up on a spectacular view of mature, closed canopy, hardwood forest. This is a block of forest that escaped the Peshtigo Fire in 1871. Oaks, maples, and ash tower eighty to a hundred feet to form the roof. The under-

story is made up primarily of shade tolerant tree species such as maple. They patiently wait for a canopy tree to fall and create a hole in the roof. Then the race to the sun begins.

Covering the ground are dozens of species of wild flowers, especially from a group known as spring ephemerals. This group does its important business -- flowering, pollinating, and setting seed -- before the trees leaf out and shut off the light. There are really three prime times to visit the forest, in mid May to see spring ephemeral wild flowers, in June to see and hear the forest bird life, and in October to enjoy the fall colors. Two trail loops total about a mile. In addition to the hardwoods, the trail goes through a small hemlock area and skirts a willow shrub wetland, which is also loaded with birds. The more adventurous can strike out off the trail to the south and east to see areas that include a cedar swamp, lowland hardwood forest, or additional upland hardwood forest. A bird hike through the area will be held on June 18, starting at 6:00 am. *(See page 7 for more details.)*

Visit the Arboretum for the sights and sounds, to learn at the seminars and workshops, or just for fun. If you have an interest in plants and gardening or nature and wildlife, there is something for you at Harmony.



Harmony Prairie

nesting season for food or pets. In 1997, the state passed new regulations protecting all turtles during the nesting season. It is illegal to collect turtles, live or dead, between Nov. 30 and July 15.

In addition, killing turtles during the closed season is illegal. Anyone who sees someone intentionally swerve to kill a turtle, intentionally destroy a turtle nest, or who picks a turtle up off the road during the closed season, can record their vehicle license number and call the DNR poaching hotline 1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-847-9367).

Taken from: "WDNR News" 2004

SUMMER MARKETS

June – August

Amberg Flea & Farmers Market

Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Amberg Antiques & Sweets, Hwy 141

Crivitz Flea & Farmers Market

Thursday mornings

Crivitz Village Hall Parking Lot

Marinette Farmers Market

Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday mornings starting at 7 a.m., Main Street Market, Main & Wells Streets, downtown Marinette



How to Manage Rusty Crayfish

Many chemicals kill crayfish, but there aren't any chemicals that will kill rusty crayfish without harming other crayfish species. Intensive harvest will not eradicate or control crayfish, but may help reduce adult populations and minimize some impacts. The best method of control is to prevent their introduction.

It is illegal to have both live crayfish and angling equipment at the same time on any inland Wisconsin water (except the Mississippi River). It is also illegal to use live crayfish for fishing bait or to release crayfish into a water of the state without a permit. A fishing license is required to harvest crayfish.

You can help with a statewide crayfish study!

The Water Action Volunteers (WAV) program is working with UW and DNR researchers to study crayfish in Wisconsin. This ongoing research project is to determine which waters of the state have which types of crayfish, especially the invasive rusty crayfish. WAV volunteers helped collect crayfish last summer and can participate again this summer. The researchers are trying to collect crayfish from as many waters as possible. If you are interested in participating, the training takes about 3 hours and collecting only involves 1-2 visits to your stream site. You can visit as many streams as you like, but the researchers only need a single crayfish collection from a waterbody to have the information they are looking for.

A training session is planned for **June 22**, 3-6 p.m. at a location to be determined, but probably in the southern part of Marinette County (Coleman-Pound area). During the training, monitors will learn how to collect crayfish either using D-frame nets or using minnow traps following specific methods designed for the research project. Monitors will learn to identify certain types of crayfish and preserve some samples for the researchers on campus. If you are interested in participating in this training, please contact Kendra Axness, UW-Extension Basin Educator for Natural Resources, at 715-582-1002 (Peshtigo), 920-438-7581 (Green Bay), or kendra.axness@ces.uwex.edu. You can also contact Kris Stepenuck, Water Action Volunteers Coordinator at 608-265-3887 or kris.stepenuck@ces.uwex.edu

NOTE: You will need to have a valid WI fishing license to participate in this project.

MORE INFORMATION

A fact sheet entitled "Rusty Crayfish: A Nasty Invader" is available from Minnesota Sea Grant by calling 218-726-6191 or on the Internet at: www.seagrant.umn.edu/exotics/rusty.html.

Information about the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources fishing regulations can be obtained at: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/fish/ or by calling your local DNR service center (check your local phone book).

Invasive Species Profile: Rusty Crayfish

Exotic species are plants and animals that spread into an ecosystem beyond their normal range. Exotic species can come from another watershed, state, country, or continent. Invasive species are plants and animals that, once established, take over an ecosystem because they are able to out-compete other species for habitat. Both native and exotic species can become invasive if the conditions are favorable for them.

What are rusty crayfish?
Rusty crayfish are exotic and invasive crustaceans that are spreading to lakes, rivers, and streams in Wisconsin. They like areas with rocks, logs, or other debris as cover. Their most notable characteristics are dark, rusty spots on each side of their carapace (middle part of their outer body) and claws that are larger than most native crayfish species.

Where are they from?
Rusty crayfish are thought to be native to the Ohio River basin and the states of Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana and Illinois.

Why are they a concern?
This crayfish eats twice as much as native crayfish, gobbling down small fish, fish eggs, and invertebrates such as snails, leeches, clams, mayflies, stoneflies, and waterfleas. They also eat aquatic plants by using their claws to uproot them. Aquatic plants provide important habitat for fish and other aquatic animals, as well as prevent erosion. By damaging underwater habitat, fish also lose their spawning areas, protective cover, and food.

These crayfish are also more aggressive than other native crayfish. Native species will swim away from predators, which makes them more vulnerable; rusty's will put their claws up in defense, which makes them less susceptible to fish predation. Rusty crayfish can harm native fish populations by eating their eggs and young. They are prolific and can displace native crayfish and hybridize with them.



How far have they spread?
Rusty crayfish have spread to Wisconsin and surrounding states, the North Eastern states, New Mexico, and many areas in Ontario, Canada. This species was introduced in Wisconsin around 1960, and populations have rapidly expanded in the state since then. Rusty crayfish are known to occur in Marinette County water bodies. Although a comprehensive survey has not been conducted, they have been seen in large numbers within the Peshtigo and Menominee River systems.

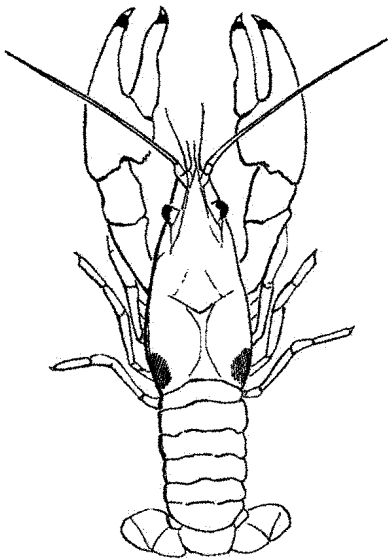
How do they spread?
These crayfish have likely spread through bait bucket release by anglers, aquarium release by hobbyists, activities of commercial harvesters, and release by students and teachers who let them go after studying them in school. They are still sold as bait and by biological supply companies.

How can I help prevent the spread of rusty crayfish?
To help prevent the spread of rusty crayfish, you can do the following:

- Avoid buying them from a bait shop, pet shop, catalog, or the Internet.
- Inspect and remove aquatic plants and animals from your boat, motor, and trailer.
- Drain any lake or river water from your boat's livewell and bilge before leaving access areas.
- Dispose of unwanted live bait and study specimens in the trash or give them to someone who will keep them indoors and not release them.
- Never dump live fish or crayfish from one body of water into another.

You can also participate in the University of Wisconsin Crayfish Survey this summer to help scientists better understand the distribution of rusty crayfish in the state.

How to Identify Rusty Crayfish (Orconectes rusticus)



- 3 to 5 inches long (nose to tail)
- Larger and smoother claws than many other crayfish
- Claws are grayish-green to reddish-brown, with an oval gap when closed and black bands on the tips
- Carapace usually bears a pair of dark spots which look like the crayfish was picked up by someone with paint on their forefinger and thumb

Look-alikes: The northern clearwater crayfish (*O. propinquus*), another invader that is a close relative of the rusty crayfish, has a claw very similar to the rusty crayfish, but lacks the dark spots on each side of the carapace. The virile, or northern, crayfish (*O. virilis*) is a native species that can often be distinguished by its claws, which are bluer and have distinct white wart-like bumps. The rusty claw, by comparison, is grayish-green to reddish-brown and is smoother.



Who You Gonna Call?

Spotlighting natural resource and conservation professionals working in Marinette County so you know who to call with questions or concerns.



Erik Aleson

Assistant Department Head
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Department
Marinette County
Phone: 715-732-7530
E-mail: ealesson@marinettecounty.com

What things do you do as part of your job?

As part of my job with the Marinette County Parks & Forestry Department, I coordinate the operations, maintenance and development of Marinette County Parks and Recreation programs. I enforce current policies and procedures, supervise and train employees, oversee purchases, maintain a system of accounts, records and reports on park operations, provide leadership with short and long-term planning, and interact with the public regarding park-related issues. Additional duties include supervising full-time and seasonal staff within the department, preparing and administering grants, and departmental budget planning. I also work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other agencies and organizations in planning Parks and Recreation projects.

What are the major projects that your department is working on right now?

A shower building for Twin Bridges County Park. This has been a long time coming and will finally be constructed this year!

Also we are working with Marinette County Tourism Alliance, Eaton Design Studio, and County Highway Department to improve all the signs on Marinette County's Scenic Waterfalls Tour. Along with new signage, we will be adding some distances & trail descriptions for the waterfalls located in county parks.

You will soon be updating the plan for managing the parks. Where can county residents obtain a copy to review, and can they participate in the planning process?

We are just getting underway with the updating of the county outdoor recreation plan. As a rough draft of the updated plan is developed there will be a copy at the Parks Office in the Marinette County Courthouse and eventually on the internet at our web site: www.marinettecounty.com/parks_recreation.htm.

A survey co-written with the Land & Water Conservation Division on Marinette County's outdoor recreation should be out by early summer. Also, planning meetings, which will be publicized, will take place throughout this year. Lastly, folks are always welcome to attend our monthly parks committee meetings

to hear the plan updates.

What is your favorite part of your job?

The favorite part of my job is getting a chance to interact with the public when I am out of my office at one of our park properties. It's great to be able to get a good feel for how our decisions are helping make our parks more enjoyable to visit. More often than not I get to pass along compliments to our parks staff and

county parks committee! I also get to hear some great ideas what folks would like to see at the Marinette County Parks.

Erik's Message: "Make sure you watch for the new blue & white signs coming soon pointing the way to our Marinette County Waterfall Tour. We are very lucky to have most of these scenic waterfalls in the Marinette County Parks system!"



Song Bird Bulletin

This monthly feature will highlight the lives of birds that almost everyone in Marinette County has heard, but most likely has not seen. The species we are going to look at belong to group known as neotropical migrant songbirds. That's quite a mouthful, but all it means is that these tiny song stylists breed in the United States and Canada but winter in Central/South America. This group includes warblers, vireos, thrushes, tanagers, wrens, and flycatchers. Although they live widely variable lives and in diverse habitats, neotropical migrants have several things in common. They are generally quite small, the males are colorful and the females generally more camouflaged, they eat mostly insects rather than seeds, and they sing.

Weighing not much more than a penny, these birds make an incredible journey each year overcoming predators, storms and adverse winds, and simple starvation if they can't find enough food. Upon reaching breeding grounds, and often on the way, females choose mates. Criteria include the perfection of his song, the brightness of his plumage, or the quality of his territory. In any case, these birds hurry to choose a mate and raise a family for the young must be old enough and strong enough to make the arduous migration south in the fall. Unlike woodpeckers and chickadees that stay in Wisconsin year round, the tight time frame means migrants may only get one chance to raise a brood. A nest destroyed by a grackle or fledglings lost to a skunk cannot be replaced that year.

A high quality territory is worth defending. Singing is the first line of defense. It tells other birds of the same species whose territory they are in and how superior the singer is. The next line of defense is to display and posture at intruders. If those tactics don't work, they fight. So the song, although often beautiful, is meant to warn rather than entertain.

Without the unique songs, it would be very difficult to find and identify the various species. These birds are most active at dawn and dusk, spend their time in treetops or thick brush and are very small. They are important to us for several reasons, but the most important may be forest health due to the huge quantities of insects they eat and for what they add to our enjoyment of the outdoors. Try to imagine the spring and summer forest without bird song.

Ovenbird

The ovenbird is a member of a group known as warblers, of which about 21 species breed in Marinette County. Several more species pass through each year on their way to and from the U.P. and Canada. Ovenbirds are about six inches long. They are solid olive brown above except for black stripes and an orange crown on their head. The under parts are white except for brown stripes on the breast. The easiest way to identify ovenbirds is by their song, an emphatic *teacher*, *TEACHER*, *TEACHER* rapidly repeated in crescendo.



The best ovenbird habitat consists of dry hardwood or mixed forest with a closed canopy, open under story, and medium brush density. Ovenbirds feed on insects, spiders and other invertebrates found on or near the forest floor. Abundance is directly related to prey density and habitat structure.

Ovenbirds nest on the ground in a depression of dead leaves. The nest has a roof of dead leaves and surrounding vegetation. The single entrance makes the nest look like an old-fashioned oven, giving the bird its name. The nest is built by the female in about five days. She then lays 3-6 eggs, which she incubates. Nests are almost impossible for us to find without seeing the female flush, and they don't flush until almost stepped on. Eggs hatch in an average of 12 days and the young leave the nest in 8 to 10 days. The normal strategy is for fledged young to be spread out some distance from the nest. This decreases the likelihood that all the young would be killed by one predator. Both parents bring food to young. When people or predators get too close to the nest or young, the adults pretend to have a broken wing, which is dragged on the ground. They make quite a commotion in an effort to lead the danger away.

Ovenbirds are one of our most common forest songbirds and part of a minority of warblers species whose numbers are increasing. Forest fragmentation, is the main long-term threat ovenbirds face. Forest fragmentation occurs when large, continuous forests are divided into smaller blocks, either by roads, clearing for agriculture, urbanization, or other development. The main impact of fragmentation is increased predation by species such as raccoons and skunks, but also nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds. Research has shown that the deeper within the forest block the ovenbird nests, the higher the nesting success and number of fledged young produced.





Mulching Around Trees & Shrubs is Critical to their Health

One of the best things you can do to assist the long-term health and well being of your trees and shrubs is to mulch around their bases. Effective mulch need not be a particular type of material, as many things will work, such as: pine needles, leaves, straw, hay, bark, wood chips, and even colored wood or bark chips.

The most important point is not what type of mulch you use but that you use it. Why? First, mulch is the natural way, as trees in forests have thick layers of decaying leaves covering their roots, not lawn or bare soil. The advantages are numerous, including cooler soil, more natural nutrient availability, more consistent water availability, and, most importantly, protection from mowers, weed whackers, and other human-caused injuries. To achieve these benefits, the best manner is to mulch at least 2-4 feet out from the base of the tree in a donut fashion. If you create a volcano effect that piles the mulch up against the tree base, you may cause insect and disease problems as the bark can soften unnaturally. By using a donut type of

configuration with the edge of the mulch touching only the point where the bark meets the soil, you actually use less mulch, but achieve all the benefits.

The reason it is extremely important to protect trees from human activity is that there is a very thin layer between the bark and wood called the cambium, which is easily injured and does not regenerate well, if at all. When this layer is bruised or damaged, the tree is more likely to be infected by canker-causing microorganisms or insects, which will likely lead to premature tree death or, at the minimum, cause the tree to be stressed and not do as well as it should. If you have any questions about tree care, problems, or planting, call Scott or Linda at the UW-Extension office, 715-732-7510 or 1-877-884-4408, or e-mail Scott at: scott.reuss@ces.uwex.edu.

(Hint: e-mailing digital photos of your tree problems is a great way to help us to understand what is affecting your tree, rather than trying to diagnose it over the phone.)

(Fish continued from page 2)

worse problems with stunting. Hybrids are also often touted as being sterile. This is not the case. Hybrids are typically 80 – 90% male fish and therefore reproduce slowly when only hybrids are present. However, if native bluegills are also present in the lake the hybrids will spawn with the female bluegill and the offspring will not have the hybrid characteristics. So what's the answer? If you want large bluegill you have to manage their predators. In the August issue of *Northwoods Journal*, we will be looking at fish population management to achieve a quality fishery.

Whatever the reason for stocking fish, there are several dangers that need to be addressed. First is the problem of unintentional introductions. Typically hatchery-raised fish are reared for some period of time in natural ponds. These ponds typically support many fish species that can hitch a ride when the target fish are seined from the pond. Make sure your fish supplier carefully sorts fish to eliminate these stowaways. Also, be sure invasive aquatic plant fragments and other exotic species don't get transferred to your lake in this manner.

As with animals in any farming operation, hatchery-raised fish are also susceptible to disease and parasite problems. If you are not careful, stocked fish from any source can introduce diseases to your lake. To reduce the chance for disease introduction consult with your fisheries biologist to make sure the hatchery is inspected by the State and has a clean bill of health. Disease transfer is another good reason not to practice "midnight stocking," the illegal practice of transferring sport caught fish from one lake to another.

Clearly, fish stocking is not a practice that should be taken lightly on any lake. In fact, stocking should only be done after careful study and with a clear goal in mind. Often an evaluation of the current fish population will indicate that no stocking is needed and managing the existing population will be sufficient. A habitat assessment will also tell you whether a new species has a chance to reproduce in your lake and if habitat is limiting the growth of existing fish. The question then is how do you get a fish survey done. The first step is to check with the DNR to see if they have any fish data for your lake. If not, you might get on the list to have a limited survey completed. At the very least you can get the best professional judgment of a local fish manager to help you plan for better fishing.

Of course, any talk of fish stocking would be incomplete without a discussion of permits. In Wisconsin, you need to have a DNR permit to stock fish in any lake or pond, even private ponds and lakes without public access. Fortunately the permits are free and can be handled by your local fish biologist. In Marinette County, call Justine Hasz in the Peshtigo DNR office at 715-582-5000.

So why isn't the DNR stocking your lake? Like most government agencies the DNR no longer has the resources to stock as many lakes as they did in the past. To make the most efficient use of its resources, the DNR now focuses more on managing habitat and anglers to achieve a self-sustaining fishery. The traditional put-and-take stocking is limited to larger waters where natural reproduction is poor but fish growth potential is good. In Marinette County, improving habitat and managing the existing fish population would better serve many of our small lakes. In the next few issues of *Northwoods Journal* we will take an in-depth look at applying these concepts to area lakes.

Where in Marinette County?

Tell us where this picture was taken and you could win a prize!



Send us a note including your name, address, and phone or go to www.marinettecounty.com/lw_home.htm to give us your answer. Any interesting facts you may know about the subject are also welcome.

**Please respond by:
June 13, 2005**

Correct answers will be entered into a drawing to win a Harmony Arboretum canvas bag.

Marinette County Parks Plan Being Updated

Marinette County Parks Department will soon be updating the plan for managing all the county operated parks. The current Marinette County Parks System Plan was completed in 1995. Part of this planning process will also update the Marinette County Outdoor Recreation Plan, put together in 1977.

The plan will establish goals and objectives for our properties and identify how the properties will be managed and developed. The plans are designed to clearly communicate to the public how the property will look and what benefits it will provide.

Our planning process:

- Identifying issues to be addressed during planning and outlining public input strategies
- Defining goals and objectives for the property
- Developing and evaluating alternative management scenarios
- Choosing a preferred management strategy through discussion and evaluation
- Review and approval by the Marinette County Board & Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

For the planning process to be effective, people who have an interest in the future of our Marinette County Parks System should get involved. There will be several opportunities for county residents to contribute to the planning process. First, a survey of Marinette County's outdoor recreation will be sent out this summer. This will help us get a feel for what people want in their outdoor recreation experiences. Planning meetings will also take place throughout this year. Folks are also always welcome to attend our monthly parks committee meetings to hear the updates as this plan is being developed. When a rough draft of the updated plan is developed, there will be a copy at the Parks Office and eventually on the Internet at: www.marinettecounty.com/parks_recreation.htm.



Priority Watershed Programs Underway in Marinette County

Did you know that Marinette County is home to two Priority Watersheds? The Priority Watershed Program is a state-funded program to improve our water quality by controlling runoff pollution. The program provides financial incentives and technical advice to farmers and waterfront property owners that choose to participate. Our two Priority Watersheds center on the Middle Inlet - Lake Noquebay and the Middle Peshtigo - Thunder River watersheds. These projects are due to end in 2006 and 2009, respectively. So far, forty-one Marinette County landowners have installed conservation projects.

For farmers, possible projects include manure storage, barnyard runoff control, managed intensive grazing practices, milk house waste control, and many others. In addition to protecting water quality, most farmers find that installing best management practices also eases their management, improves herd health, and saves money.

Best management practices for water front property focus on erosion control and shoreline restoration. Replacing lawn with native trees, shrubs, and groundcovers in shoreline, or riparian, areas is the best way to help shoreline wildlife and improve the fishery in your lake or stream. Land & Water Conservation staff meets with landowners to help choose the design and plants most likely to succeed at their site. In addition to helping a lake's water quality, fish, and wildlife, restoring a shoreline to native plants allows people to spend less time on maintenance and more time enjoying their property.

If you are interested in participating in these programs but aren't sure if your property lies within project boundaries, or if you would like to learn more about what practices are available, just visit the Marinette County web site at:

www.marinettecounty.com/lw_ps_pw.htm.

Even if you are outside watershed boundaries, funding may be available from other programs for your project. Just give us a call.

Bird Hike at Harmony Arboretum

If you enjoy listening to the birds sing each summer but don't know who is singing to you, join us June 18, at Harmony Arboretum at 6 a.m. We will walk the property and identify the birds we encounter by sight and song. The Arboretum covers about 478 acres and encompasses habitats from prairie to upland hardwoods to shrub wetland. Over the years, we have found about 80 bird species including bobolink and black-billed cuckoo.

Bring binoculars, a field guide, waterproof footwear (for the dew), insect repellent, and your bird questions. We have a few pairs of binoculars for people in need. Our route consists of easy walking on internal roads and trails. Plan on around three hours to complete the hike. Harmony Arboretum is located just south of Hwy 64 on County E about 7 miles west of Marinette. For more information, call the Land & Water Conservation office at 715-732-7783.



Harmony Arboretum

Schedule of Events 2005

Located 7 miles west of Marinette, ½ mile south of State Highway 64 on County E.

All programs are free unless it is stated a fee is required.

June 7 ~ Container Gardening

6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Learn the best ways to grow vegetables and flowers without a garden. Sponsored by Mayflower Greenhouse of Oneida. Registration requested: contact Linda at 732-7510 or linda.warren@ces.uwex.edu.

June 9 ~ Lawn Management Series

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Nutrient Management: using fertilizers & spreaders. Registration requested: contact Linda at 732-7510 or linda.warren@ces.uwex.edu. \$5 fee for handouts and refreshments.

June 18 ~ Birding Hike

6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Take a guided hike through the Harmony Hardwoods to see and hear many different species. (Read more about details in article below)

June 18 ~ Growing Early Vegetables

9:00 a.m. to Noon

UW-Extension Horticulture Agent, Scott Reuss, will review optimum management of early-season vegetables, some of which will be ready for harvest and taste-testing.

June 23 ~ Lawn Management Series

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Insect & Disease: identification and management. Registration requested: contact Linda at 732-7510 or linda.warren@ces.uwex.edu. \$5 fee for handouts and refreshments.

June 30 ~ Invasive Species ID & Management

10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

10:00 a.m. – Scott Reuss will discuss and demonstrate control options for some of the most common invasive plant species.

6:30 p.m. – Take a one-mile walk with Scott Reuss to identify and learn about the invasive species in the area.

July 7 ~ Lawn Management Series

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Weeds: identification and management. Registration requested: contact Linda at 732-7510 or linda.warren@ces.uwex.edu. \$5 fee for handouts and refreshments.

July 19 ~ Building a Water Garden

6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Hands-on instruction on building a water garden from scratch. Registration requested: contact Linda at 732-7510 or linda.warren@ces.uwex.edu.

July 26 ~ Plant Pest ID Clinic

Bring your plant, insect, and disease samples to Harmony and let Scott Reuss identify the problem and suggest management steps.

August 18 ~ Prairie Walk

6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Learn what a prairie is and why people are restoring them today. This is the time of year when prairie flowers bloom and grasses turn fall colors.

September 10 ~ Harvest Fest

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

This taste-testing morning will help you choose fruit and vegetable varieties for next year. Fall garden flowers are at peak and early apples are ready. Classes on fall planting, fruit trees, and closing your garden for the winter.

September 24 ~ Putting Your Garden to Bed

9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Includes management and proper harvesting of late season vegetables.



Land & Water Conservation Division Marinette Co. Land Information Department

715-732-7780

akostner@marinettecounty.com

University of Wisconsin-Extension

715-732-7510

scott.reuss@ces.uwex.edu

To ensure equal access, please make requests for reasonable accommodations as soon as possible prior to the scheduled program. If you need this material in another format, please contact the UW-Extension office.



Suggestion Box

Let us know how we can make this a better publication. Contact us at:

Marinette County Land & Water Conservation

1926 Hall Ave

Marinette, WI 54143

(715) 732-7784

akostner@marinettecounty.com

www.marinettecounty.com/lw_home.htm



Area Events Calendar

- May 28-29 Memorial Weekend Field Jam Bluegrass Festival**
N7909 Kenny Drive, Crivitz. Sat. 11 a.m. to midnight, Sun. noon. to 11 p.m.
Advanced admission \$15, weekend camping \$15. Call 715-856-6813 or go to:
www.memorialweekendfieldjam.com.
- June 4-5 Wisconsin’s Free Fishing Weekend**
All ages can fish any Wisconsin waters without a license or stamps. Applies to residents and nonresidents. All fishing regulations, such as size and bag limits, are still in effect.
- June 4 Marinette County Parks Free Day**
Free admission to all Marinette County parks.
- June 4 Camp Bird Open House**
Camp Bird, 14 miles west of Crivitz. Follow signs off County W.
10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free children’s activities. More info 715-732-7530.
- June 5 State Parks Open House Day**
Free admission to all state parks, forests and trails. Check out the Peshtigo River State Forest!
- June 11-12 Michigan’s Free Fishing Weekend**
All fishing license fees will be waived for residents and out-of-state visitors on both inland and Great Lakes waters. All fishing regulations still apply.
- June 18 Bird Hike**
Harmony Arboretum. 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. Guided hike through Harmony Hardwoods to view and hear assorted birds.
- June 16-19 Porterfield Country Music Festival**
Green’s Green Acres Campground, 6 miles west of Marinette on Hwy 64. Cost \$65. Four days of camping, concessions and national entertainers. Contact Linda Green at 715-789-2130.
- June 25 Stephenson Rescue/Fire Annual Picnic**
Stephenson Town Hall, County Road X, Crivitz. Noon to 10 p.m. Food, drinks, raffles, games, polka band, rock band, and water ball.
- June 26 Menominee River Century Bicycle Ride**
Starts 8 a.m. at Marinette High School, Pierce Ave. Scenic 10, 25, 50 and 70-mile routes. Preregistration is required. Contact 1-800-236-6681.
- June 26 Art for All**
Great Lakes Memorial Park, Menominee, MI. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Juried art show and sale.

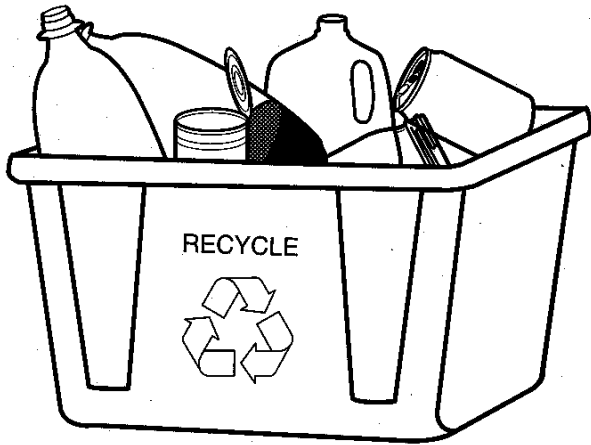
MAR-OCO County Landfill

(Marinette and Oconto Counties)
N7785 Shaffer Road, west of Crivitz
715-854-7530

2005 Hours

8 a.m. – 4 p.m. M-F
8 a.m. – 12 p.m. first and third Saturdays,
May – September

Any yard waste, liquid waste of any kind or recyclable items are not accepted.



Recycle Centers

(Town of Stephenson)

Twin Bridge site, County X
Tuesday, Saturday, Sunday
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Crivitz site, August Street
Wednesday and Saturday
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Newspaper, cardboard, magazines, glass bottles and jars, tin cans, aluminum, plastic containers (1 & 2), used motor oil, car batteries, scrap metal & yard waste accepted.

Spokes & Folks Bicycle Club

www.spokesandfolks.com

Ride Schedule

May 28:

Fumee Lake Mountain Bike Ride

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Thirsty Whale Bar, Norway, MI, or carpool from Marinette. Two separate rides. A beginner group will explore a nice hard pack trail around the lake while the technical group will explore a great single track. Afterwards, we will head to the Thirsty Whale to celebrate summer and future rides. Contact Barry at 906-863-2727.

Ongoing:

Sunday Morning Breakfast Rides

Call Barry or check the website for time and place.

Guests are welcome,
helmets are required,
and lights are
recommended
on some rides.



What’s In Season?

Home Grown Produce in Marinette County

May-June:

Asparagus

Andrew Chucka, Jr.
N29239 Hwy 141, Crivitz , WI
(Just south of Cty X in Middle Inlet)
715-854-7800, Call for availability
and large orders

Dale Reisner
W6963 Cty P, Porterfield, WI
715-789-2841

Country Gardens
W4851 Cty D, Peshtigo, WI
(¾ mile SE of Hwy 64 on Cty D)
715-789-2291; Call ahead for
large quantities

Jandt Brothers
N3439 Jandt Road, Peshtigo, WI
715-789-2264

Sue Seymour
W4431 Hwy 64, Peshtigo, WI
715-789-2563; Call ahead

Strawberries

Wojtkiewicz Strawberry Acres
4½ miles west of Crivitz on Cty W to Hideaway Lane
715-854-7818; PYO only; Mon-Sat 7-noon, 4:30-7p.m.
Call for early season hours

